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Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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might believe in Providence, even if we knew nothing of the Old Testament. But in the New Testament the fact is history, and is only the other side of the spiritual relation.

Indeed, the second part of the Creed is nothing but a recitation of historical facts about Jesus Christ; and it would be impossible to leave them out, and yet to teach a child that he was a member of Christ, a spiritual truth which is certainly eternal and practical. We teach a child that he is a member of such a family, and these relations have a practical value. They are what a child is, and we expect what he does to follow from them. So with that greater relation. The child is a member of Christ, and what he does should follow in just the same matter-of-fact, practical way. Only this is a far deeper relation, touching not only a part of the child's self, but the whole—it is eternal.

We ought never, I think, to teach a Bible story without bringing out the spiritual truth which it teaches, not necessarily putting the moral in words in cut-and-dry fashion, but letting the child feel it, which we can only do by really having it present to our own minds. And we ought never to teach a doctrine, an eternal truth, without likewise showing its practical side. Each story or doctrine otherwise taught has done the child not good, but harm, teaching half-truths, so that they are no better than falsehoods. And I think that we should be less afraid of teaching definite spiritual truth, if we remembered that all theology is nothing but an expansion of the text, "God is Love."

## THE FÉSOLE CLUB PAPERS.

By W. G. COLLINGWOOD.

### XIII.

#### THE LIFE SCHOOL.

WE are now in the third year of the Fésole Club. All this while we have been learning how to draw and paint. We have begun at the beginning, with the simplest methods of art, and laid foundations as firm, we hope, as those walls built into, and upon, the living rock of the ancient city, from which we derive the name of our society, and the rules of its work. It is time that we should ask ourselves, "What are we going to draw, now that we have learned?"

Pictures, of course! Ah, young friends and fellow-students, the people whose pictures are worth drawing, begin early and work late, every day, and all day, year after year; striving; struggling; laying down their lives for their labour; and are heaven-born artists to begin with. You may indeed be such; but if so, go to one of the great schools, and take up the profession in a business-like way. The Fésole Club is not for you; it is only a little quiet corner, into which a few old-fashioned folk have withdrawn, retainers of an exiled leader, with some young people whose country lives keep them out of the busy world of the studios. In this our Arden, exempt from public ambitions and modern aims, we have found sermons in stones, unashamed: and we ask not to be famous painters, but only humble lovers of Art, glad if we may recognise her, when we see her flitting, Diana-like, through the twilight, among mysteries of life that without her light are unseen and unregarded.

Not to make fine pictures, nor to amuse ourselves idly and irresponsibly; but to use our drawing as a means of education; that is what, I think, we should desire, and may expect. The sister art of Writing, how do we use it to educational advantage?



Every student knows the value of note-taking and essay-writing, by which attention is fixed, observation sharpened, and memory supported. You could not expect much lasting good from a course of lessons, in which you took no notes and wrote no exercises.

But when our books, as in Arden, are running brooks, and when we listen to the lessons of the trees, what sort of notes are we to take? It is only a part of the teaching of Nature that can be put into words. Much that she says, and that we do well to know, cannot be written down in characters of any language, except that of Painting. She speaks to us in forms and colours, and the impressions we receive are lost unless we can note them down in form and colour. The laws we discern are incompletely stated in printer's type; indeed, they are often quite invisible even to scientifically trained men, whose science means only book-learning, who have not the artist's eye for lines of structure and movement. It is not merely a question of the amount of enjoyment received, but of actual perception and instruction. Examples could be given of serious mistakes arising from the want of an artist's eye to observe natural phenomena, and an artist's hand to record them; but the value of drawing as an aid to science-study has been so generally admitted, that nothing need be said, if it were not for a widespread notion that the instantaneous camera has replaced the sketch-book; and that the young student of the twentieth century will only need to buy a Kodak, in order to beat all the old observers.

In certain things that is the case; but there are two reasons why drawing is still worth learning.

1. Because, after all, photography is inadequate. In most observations the colour is as important as the form; and a record, however rough, which gives colour, tells a great deal more than any photograph can tell. Also a photograph, unless the object can be artificially arranged under carefully chosen light and shade, is apt to be confused, or to show accidental detail at the expense of the leading lines which are the real requirements. Moreover, it commonly happens that we want to note things in places and upon occasions when we can't be expected to carry a camera; but a note-book, and even a miniature colour-box, will never be much of a burden in anybody's pocket.

2. The photographer, as such, is not a qualified observer.

The habit of sketching makes one sensitive to impressions, sharpens the eye and the memory in a wonderful way. Of course, if a sketcher aim at being an artist pure and simple, and look only for "effects" which will work up into pictures, then he sees only "effects." But if he be interested in any branch of science, his sketching habit keeps him on the lookout; and the necessity for choosing the leading lines trains him to seize them in any case, much more when he is in the act of drawing.

Now, for educational purposes, this is surely what we need; the habit of looking, and the power of seeing. It is the horrid fact that most people are half blind. They rush through fine scenery in the railway, or on bicycles, or in a pedestrianising mood; and if you ask them, "Did you see this or that?" well—they hadn't time! There was a grand sunset the other night; yes, they saw it. Did they notice the iridescence before the sun went down? No! The unusual shapes of cirrus, and their mysterious consent of movement? They don't remember. The strange obscurity of olive sky behind certain brightest primrose-golden flakes of flame? A very little questioning makes you ashamed to ask more: your neighbour has "looked with a half-glance upon the sky . . . and said the world is beautiful." For him the drama of the sunset was played in vain; he was like a deaf man at an opera: while your sketching taught you to see, and perhaps helped you to fix the sight in your note-book.

We have had a wonderful frost this winter, and great chances for studying the crystal forms of water, more beautiful than all the diamonds of Sindbad's valley. Who in all this country, we might venture to ask, has recorded the infinite varieties of frost ferns on the window; the stars of falling snow and delicately faceted cones of hail; the interwoven rays of freshly forming ice, and the dainty Etruscan jewellery of tiny hexagons beneath broken cat-ice by any pool? Who knows the fronds and tablets of rime condensed from chilly night-fogs; the sparkling lace-work that dressed every dead leaf and twig and splinter of stone in Court attire of Titania; the myriad columns that, in spite of warped failure, and in the midst of distorted effort, lift nevertheless, by strength of union, their tons and tons of soil and stones by every soaked wayside and irrigated bank, and make the very mud of the common road into enchanted grottoes and fairy palaces? Who has drawn faithfully and fully the delicate



curves of snow-wreaths and drooping viscous slabs of ice that slip and cling to walls and eaves; the stalactite and stalagmite of icicles, and all the chalcedonic forms of frost that imprison the last tricklings of every gutter and brook? This is not the artist's work, nor is it the province of the physicist, and it is left for us sketching amateurs to do, some day.

In previous papers I have tried to suggest the value of drawing plants as they grow, and to any one who cares for them as living things—who wants to know more of them than the mere grammar of botany—there is a field for age-long research in recording their habits of life and gestures and growth. No mere words can tell accurately the full natural history of the mosses; for example, in what dells and crannies they congregate; by what union of spreading growth they carpet the soil; in what hardy bivouac they fringe the edges of bleak rock, camping out in the enemy's country, fighting their way with savage stone and hostile weather, until they have won a home for themselves. You know, perhaps, the species of mosses; a good exercise of memory. But you don't know the life of mosses until you have watched it so; you know them only when you know their ways: in a less degree, but in the same manner, their ways must be learnt as you learn human nature, which needs more than the elements of anthropological classification to disentangle it. And all this, again, is the province of the intelligent sketching-student; it is not in books, nor in pictures.

When we come to the study of animal life, this kind of work is much more needful, though more difficult. But by using opportunities out of doors, and by keeping little creatures in kindly captivity, not needlessly prolonged, what can you not discover about their habits and uses? You may have a complete series of butterflies or beetles pinned upon card, or a museum of snail-shells, and yet be ignorant of the way the real creatures live and move and have their being. But watch them crawling or flying, feeding and resting, sketch them so, and you have a new intimacy, no more with dead matter, but with the living little people who share with us the mingled bounty and severity of the kind, stern mother of us all.

I propose then, during the forthcoming year, to turn the Fésole Club to this special use of the power the members have gained; and to ask them to devote the time they can afford to the study of natural life. I don't attempt to teach science, but

to show how drawing may be made useful in studies that go hand-in-hand with science. The subjects must be limited to such things as most members will find easy to come at; they must be simple enough for beginners to attempt, and yet giving scope for the more advanced to make drawings that we shall all like looking at. Members of the Club who have special interests are invited to send their sketches, of whatever kind, for criticism, and for the pleasure of the rest in seeing their work. For we help one another more than we know, in showing our strength and confessing our failures—that is the value of class-teaching. And it is pleasant to hear that so many of the members find the monthly portfolio interesting and instructive, far more than if their drawings were returned alone, even with the fullest criticism. They find, as they ought, that example is worth more than precept.

We have already done something in the way of plant-studies, and crystal-forms might be inconvenient to obtain, and so we may venture at once into the animal kingdom, attacking it, on our old principle, point by point. I do not mean to ask you at once to draw birds on the wing, but just a feather to begin with. Not horses galloping, but snails creeping; and by-and-by, after a few months of preliminary studies, I suspect you will be betrayed into attempting sketches of the sheep in the meadow and the birds in the trees. It will be a short step, then, to the human figure, as you catch sight of it from the window or watch it from a corner of the drawing-room in the evening. And some such studies of natural history I hope you will slip into the portfolio as extra contributions.

There are two chief points to be borne in mind in these sketches. First, that they are the notes of animal structure in its outward aspects. They are not to be anatomical. Skinned cats and dissected rats have no place in the Fésole Club, nor, I believe, ought they to have any place in general education. But everything that we can learn about an animal by looking at it in its normal natural conditions ought to be interesting, and is likely to be useful. And in the careful drawing of these outward and visible signs of the great gift of life you lay the foundation for technical power in art—and, let me add, for a sound and healthy taste.

Secondly, as these sketches are studies of life, they must necessarily involve some attempt at representing movement.



And here again we shall be following the laws of Fésole when we determine that if we draw birds they shall not be stuffed birds; if donkeys, not dead donkeys; for the grace and expression of the creature depend not only on its structure, but upon the fact of life and movement in its limbs. And when you come to the human figure you will find that the difference between life and inertness is very generally the chief, and often the only, difference between thoroughly good and thoroughly bad art.

Let us begin with simple forms and quiet movements, though always bearing in mind that organic forces and vital action are the objects of our search. For the first lesson, not to attempt too much, let us find a couple of feathers, one from the breast, and one of the quills from the wing of any bird. I leave you in both cases to adopt the method of drawing you find most convenient; the best would be to fix with the pen all that you can see of definite lines, sketched first with the pencil, and then to lay, upon that prepared beginning, your masses of colour, matched as nearly as possible at once, and gradated by taking off light and adding dark before the first work dries. Some retouching may be necessary; but don't begin with wilful error in the hope that stippling will mend everything.

The feathers can be pinned on a card, and propped vertically, or nearly so, on a table before you. If they are very small they should be at arm's-length, not closer. Your aim should be to arrange them so as to give the most characteristic view, and to paint them so as to tell the greatest number of facts about them.\* An interesting chapter on the structure of feathers will be found in Ruskin's "Laws of Fésole," well worth study. But your own inspection, before you begin to draw, will show you the main points that are to be seized; the difference of the breast-feather from the quill, as being part of the dress of the bird, exquisite in radiation, and in the tender gradations which alone will express its softness and downiness. In the quill-feather,

\* Drawings should be about the size of a page of the *Parents' Review*, on rather smooth drawing-paper or card; they should be packed with a bit of stout card or mill-board, and sent by book-post or parcel-post to the writer, at "Coniston, Lancashire," by the end of the month in which the lesson appears in this magazine. They are then returned in a portfolio, with the work of other members and criticisms. Subscriptions to the Club, one guinea each member per annum. The year begins with this month, March. Announcement of the prize-winner for the year will be made in the next number of the *Parents' Review*.

on the other hand, you will find your work to be to render the curvature of the quill itself, and the rounded, leaf-like surface of the whole feather. Think of it, while you draw, as the oar-blade with which the bird strikes the air, in which it rows its little boat, the means of its mysterious flight; quiet as it lies before you, the very type of movement and of energy, the sacred symbol of life from lowest to highest—raven's wings for wandering, dove's wings for home-returning; cherub-wings, with a noise like the noise of many waters, as the voice of the Almighty; wings of the Spirit that brooded over chaos, and that fosters the nurslings of eternity, as a hen gathers her chickens, sheltering them under her wings.